

Acts Chapter Twenty-Eight

Acts 28:1-6

And when they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all. But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they *began* saying to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live." However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm. But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and *began* to say that he was a god.

- The bay of Malta—where this took place is called St. Paul's Bay today
- Malta was bombed the most during WWII because of what a strategic location it is.
- The promise of God in Mark 16:18—fulfilled in Paul's experience—he suffered no ill effects from the venom.
- Natives had assumed Paul was guilty of a great crime and justice was catching up with him.
- Rome was known for justice—more than mercy
- Almost all naval traffic was on other side of island—this side was unknown to the sailors.
- Malta means 'refuge'.
- Natives go to extremes—first think Paul must be a great criminal—then that he must be a god—both conclusion distorted.

Acts 28:7-10

Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days. And it came about that the father of Publius was lying *in bed* afflicted with *recurrent* fever and dysentery; and Paul went in *to see* him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him. And after this had happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and getting cured. And they also honored us

with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied *us* with all we needed.

- Publius—someone on this island who represented Rome
- They had lost everything—found themselves entirely dependent on these residents until they could continue their journey.
- Fever/dysentery—some think the malady was called Malta fever—comes from milk of Maltese goats—symptoms can last for months.
- After he prayed/laid hands on him—these seem to be separated from each other.

Acts 28:11-15

And at the end of three months we set sail on an Alexandrian ship which had wintered at the island, and which had the Twin Brothers for its figurehead. And after we put in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. And from there we sailed around and arrived at Rhegium, and a day later a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. There we found *some* brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome. And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

- Take another African ship
- Twin Brothers—Roman gods
- Syracuse—capital city of Sicily
- Stay with believers at Puteoli for a week
- Market of Appius—approx 43 miles from Rome—believers make quite a journey in order to meet him/escort him in.
- Paul is now on the Appian Way
- We already know that there are believers in Rome—Paul wrote to them 2 years earlier
- They have been waiting to meet/greet him

Acts 28:16-19

And when we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

And it happened that after three days he called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they had come together,

he *began* saying to them, “Brethren, though I had done nothing against our people, or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. “And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death. “But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar; not that I had any accusation against my nation.

- Population of Rome—2 million (1 million slaves/1 million free)
- When Paul went to Rome—the city had been in existence for 800 years. Coliseum had not been built yet—some of the major buildings: Temple of Jupiter, palaces for Caesar, and Temple of Mars (war god).
- Paul had freedom to live in a house—but a soldier always guarded him
- Phil 1:13
- He approaches the Jews first as he comes into the city—makes inquiry of them concerning himself—makes his case to them
- Two responses to his message—some believe while others turn away
- Jews had been expelled from Rome for awhile under Claudius (Acts 18:2)—but they have been back for 5-6 years.
- Paul probably arrived in Rome in 60 AD. Nero succeeded Claudius and lifted the ban in 54 AD.

Acts 28:20-22

“For this reason therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel.” And they said to him, “We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you. “But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.”

- The effects of the spread of the gospel have reached their ears.
- They don't seem to hold an offense—or—defensive against the message

Acts 28:23-25

And when they had set a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. And some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. And when they did not agree with one another, they *began* leaving

after Paul had spoken one *parting* word, “The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying,

- Paul explains their rejection of the gospel by quoting Isaiah 6:9-10

Acts 28:26-31

**‘GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY,
“YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND;
AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;**

**FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL,
AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR,
AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES;
LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES,
AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS,
AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN,
AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.”’**

“Let it be known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.” [And when he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]

And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

- Paul spends 2 years in Rome before his trial in Caesar's court
- Received visitors continually for the sake of the Kingdom
- Paul eventually has his appearance before Caesar Nero—likely acquitted of these charges—by most estimates was free another 5 years until he is arrested again—imprisoned—condemned—put to death at command of Nero in 66-67 AD.

Acts Chapter Twenty-eight—Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Read Matthew 13:1-23 and Isaiah 6

Dig:

- 1) How much of Paul's warning in Acts 27:10 came to pass?
- 2) How did the natives of Malta care for those who were shipwrecked? How long were they there?
- 3) How do the natives interpret the incident when Paul is bitten by a 'snake'? What two mistakes do they make?
- 4) What do Paul's shipmates learn about him when they are on Malta?
- 5) Who are the 'twin brothers'—and why would a ship have them for a figurehead?
- 6) What does vs 15 indicate about Paul's heart after all he has come through?
- 7) Why does Paul call this meeting with the Jewish leaders in Rome?
- 8) What kind of report has reached these Roman Jews about Paul or Christianity?

9) How did Paul reason with the Jews who came to hear him?

10) Why would Luke choose this place to end his report to Theophilus?

Discuss:

- 1) What has been your greatest 'take-away' or encouragement from studying the Book of Acts?
- 2) Share one place where you were convicted as we studied this book together.

Point of Prayer:

Pray for a fresh work of the Holy Spirit in your life and an open door for effective ministry.

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) Have you ever received extravagant hospitality? Describe.
- 2) What is the difference between entertainment and hospitality? Where and when do you have the opportunity to offer hospitality to strangers?
- 3) As you read through this book, did you have one situation or person inspire you in some way?

- 4) If there was an Acts 29—what would you want to know? Is there any way to know this?

- 5) Since the Book of Acts is still being written in the lives of the church today—which of your God stories could be included?

- 6) Have any limitations been a part of your spiritual journey? What did you learn from Paul about faithfulness and perseverance?